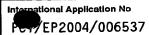
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT



A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 B21C37/06 B21C37/09 B23K35/30 F16L9/16 B21C37/15 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) B21C B23K F16L IPC 7 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Relevant to claim No. Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages 1-22 US 5 553 640 A (FERENCZY NIKOLAUS ET AL) Υ 10 September 1996 (1996-09-10) cited in the application column 2, line 30 - line 67 column 3, line 15 - line 44 column 3, line 52 - column 4, line 33 claim 1 Y 1-22 US 6 413 651 B1 (MENG QINGLIAN ET AL) 2 July 2002 (2002-07-02) column 3, line 24 - line 66 column 5, line 8 - line 37 examples 2,3; table 1 claims 1,4 -/--Patent family members are listed in annex. Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. X . Special categories of cited documents: "T" later document published after the International filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance invention *E* earlier document but published on or after the international "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another diation or other special reason (as specified) "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such docu-"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or ments, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art. other means 'P' document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "&" document member of the same patent family Date of mailing of the international search report Date of the actual completion of the International search 4 October 2004 18/10/2004 Authorized officer Name and mailing address of the ISA Reduces of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentiaan 2 NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31–70) 340–2040, Tx. 31 651 epo ni, Fax: (+31–70) 340–3016 Gavriliu, A

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